

Members of the Commission:

My name is Tim Smith. I am general manager of KMIT-FM and KUQL-FM in Mitchell, South Dakota.

I am quite certain that the commission will receive responses to it's criticism of localization in radio from a variety of market sizes across the country.

As a broadcaster from a rural community of 15,000 people, the only way we exist and compete in the marketplace is to be local.

When tornado's threaten our listening area or when blizzards close roads and schools, WE are the information link to the people. Our regular programming stops immediately for local news and weather information.

I would share the story of a mother from Spencer, South Dakota, who sent us a letter of thanks for saving her life and the life of her mother when the electricity went off in her town 20 minutes before a tornado completely destroyed the small town of 150 people east of Mitchell. She had no other information source other than her battery powered radio to learn that the storm would be in her town within ten minutes. She was able to get to her mothers house just in time for both of them to take shelter in the basement. Both homes were completely destroyed.

Let me also share the story of a mother working in Mitchell when a funnel cloud was spotted near Mt. Vernon, a community 12-miles west of Mitchell in June of 2003. Because our radio station was on in her office, she was able to alert, by cell phone, her three children who were doing chores inside the barn on her family farm and had no idea the tornado was approaching. They went to the underground shelter. The barn was completely destroyed 15-minutes later.

I understand that these are dramatic examples, but this is what we do. It is what both our listeners and our advertisers expect of us.

We provide ten newscasts daily on each of our stations. These are local newscasts. They relate issues from city council, county commission and school board meetings as well as health and public safety issues. We provide a weekly forum program where local issues are discussed. During our state legislative session our local state senators and representatives are on the phone "live" from our state capital each Saturday morning to inform the public of issues being discussed. This is only a small part of what we do.

In the past year alone, we have provided free air time to raise money for scholarships for every graduating senior from our local high school should they choose to further their education. We helped re-build our local performing arts theatre after it was destroyed by fire. Sponsored the local Cancer Walk which raised over \$20,000, and co-sponsored fund raising projects with the Salvation Army, Cancer Society, the Womens Safehouse, local fire and police departments and many more.

Our committment to local radio is not unique in South Dakota. To the contrary, the vast majority of stations provide the same services on a daily basis and take very seriously their responsibility as trustees of the public airwaves.

I would invite the members of the commission to call upon leaders of any of the communities we serve. I am confident you will hear that they regard us a partner to help deliver information, as well as entertainment, to the people in our area.

Local radio is what we do.....everyday!

Sincerely,

Tim Smith  
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